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Donovan Off To Cuba, Aims To Free 1,113

By ROBERT McDONALD

With a request for Americans to pray for the success of his mission, attorney James B. Donovan left New York for Havana yesterday to try to win release of 1,113 anti-Castroites captured in last year's Bay of Pigs invasion.

Donovan, who negotiated the release of U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers from a Soviet prison in exchange for Russian spy Rudolf Abel, denied that any ransom will be offered "as such" for the captives on whom Fidel Castro has put a \$58 million price tag.

"If money is involved," he said in a press conference before he left his 161 William St. office, "it will be in the nature of a gift from the American people to the Cuban people."

Food, medicines and other necessities in short supply in the former island republic also may figure as considerations, he said.

"A Moral Obligation"

"All the people of the United States have a deep moral obligation

full responsibility for the ill-fated invasion."

Private Undertaking

"I hope this mission will accomplish something and bring the American and Cuban people closer together," he added.

He said he didn't know if he would meet Castro in person. He expects to meet with "the lead-

ers of the Cuban government and whomever they want to represent them."

He described the mission as "a private undertaking on a humanitarian basis" but admitted Washington has declared "its sympathy with the objectives of the committee."

Exiles Go With Him

Donovan is acting as general counsel of the Cuban Families Committee for Liberation of Prisoners of War.

With him went two exiled Cuban leaders, Alvaro Sanchez, president of the committee, and Dr. Ernesto Freyre, secretary. Both have sons among the captured patriots in Havana prisons.

Donovan, who won State Department permission last week for his trip, said the time and

tion to these prisoners," Donovan said. "The 1,113 include Catholics, Protestants and Jews; they are white and Negro; they are professional men and trade unionists.

"Our mission is humanitarian and we are confident of its success. All we ask is your prayers."

Asked to elaborate on his reference to the "deep moral obligation" of this country, Donovan answered:

"President Kennedy assured



James B. Donovan
Asks prayers for mission

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place of their departure for Cuba would not be disclosed.

He was asked if he had requested refugee students in Miami to refrain from further shelling of Havana, which might set back his negotiations. Donovan said that restraining such attacks was Washington's affair.

"I do hope," he added, smiling, "the students won't shell the house we are staying in."

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